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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: TOP STORIES, TERRORISM/MILITARY,
MISCELLANEOUS, POLITICAL - NOVEMBER 16, 2009

Summary: Several dailies on Monday ran U.S. Embassy statement to Geo TV denying allegations by American journalist Seymour Hersh that there is a special unit stationed at the Embassy to deal with any nuclear emergency. The reports, quoting the Embassy spokesman, brushed off all such reports as "baseless and misleading." Secretary Clinton's remarks, made during her interview with German magazine Spiegel, that "Pakistan's nuclear weapons are safe," received front-page display. Newspapers highlighted reports that at least 24 militants were killed as jetfighters bombed Taliban positions in Orakzai Agency. Weekend editions reported that U.S. Congressmen assured speedy legislation on Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two countries. Reports of NSA General Jones' meetings with top Pakistani officials were also highlighted. Newspapers ran the U.S. Embassy's statement condemning the last week's terror attacks in Bannu and Peshawar. "The Nation," opined that "it was never feasible for the U.S. to take out our weapons by military targeting, so their aim has been to create enough instability in the country." End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: U.S. Rejects Hersh Report - "The News" (11/16)

"The United States has rejected the reports published in a section of press that its special forces have reached Pakistan to secure its nuclear assets and said neither there is nuclear emergency and revolt in Pakistan nor the U.S. forces are in Pakistan. Sources in US embassy told this news agency that Pakistani nuclear assets are in safe hands and its command and control is extremely effective and democratic institutions are stable. Terming the report of US journalist Simon Hersh as baseless and negative, the sources said Pakistan and the US share strong partnership and both the countries are confident for increasing it."

Editorial: "U.S. Wants Pak Nukes ," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (11/16)

"What many of us had suspected for some years now, that the US wanted to take out our nuclear weapons one way or another, has been confirmed by a senior US journalist, Seymour Hersh. It was never feasible for the US to take out our weapons by military targeting, so their aim has been to create enough instability in the country and thereby justify taking the nukes in their custody. They are seeking access to our triggers and weapon systems' sites but have failed so far. The Hersh account also talks of an erroneous alert whereby the US mobilized a rapid response force which actually arrived in Dubai before realizing the alarm was false. . . It is

probably true that the team meant to seize our nuclear assets is already housed in the US embassy. Surely it is time for the government to come clean and send these Americans back before it is too late - if it is not already so."

Editorial Note: "Special U.S. Team's Arrival In Pakistan," an editorial note in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (11/16)

"American journalist Seymour Hersh has disclosed that to combat nuclear emergency a special American squad has reached Pakistan.... Armed operatives of American Embassy and Blackwater are freely roaming the streets, taking pictures of sensitive locations and are trying to have access to sensitive area in Kahuta posing as instructors. The police and intelligence agencies reports on these activities have already been sent to the government.... And now America has gotten the opportunity to send a special squad to have access to Pakistan's nuclear installations.... If the U.S. journalist's story is correct then the government should take strict note of it and should limit the activities of American officials. Those Americans who are involved in hostile activities should be sent to their homes."

Editorial: "Pakistan's Nuclear Assets and Disclosures of Seymour Hersh," an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (11/16)

"Renowned journalist Seymour Hersh's claim that a special American squad has reached Pakistan to take over our nuclear assets in case of any emergency, exposes the real objectives of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. Washington has also assigned special role to New Delhi and Tel Aviv to achieve the target of depriving Pakistan of

its nuclear deterrent. These external powers are utilizing all resources to destabilize Pakistan through terrorist attacks in order to create anarchy which could provide them an opportunity to lay their hands on our nuclear assets."

News Story: Pakistan's Nukes Are Safe: Clinton - "Daily Times" (11/16)

"U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton believes Pakistan's nuclear weapons are safe, as the government and the military have taken adequate steps to protect the arsenal." "The nuclear arsenal that Pakistan has, I believe, is secure. I think the government and the military have taken adequate steps to protect that," Hillary told German weekly magazine SPIEGEL in an interview."

News Story: Taliban's Orakzai positions bombed "Dawn" (11/16)

"At least 24 militants were killed as jets bombed Taliban positions in the tribal region of Orakzai and troops maintained pressure on terrorists in South Waziristan and Swat on Sunday. At least seven militants were killed and six camps of the banned Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and a seminary were destroyed in Orakzai Agency."

News Story: Peshawar Blast Claims Several Lives "The News" (11/16)

"At least four people have been killed and 25 others injured in a powerful explosion that occurred in Peshawar's outskirts of Badhbeer on Kohat Road near police station, Geo News reported on Monday morning."

News Story: "US Congressmen assure Pakistan to expedite legislation for FTA" "The News" (11/14)

"US Congressmen, presently visiting Pakistan, assured their Pakistani colleagues that they will make sincere efforts to expedite the process for the legislation for Free Trade Agreement between the two countries to promote trade and economic relations. Talking to a group of journalists here on Friday, the Congressmen said they told the Pakistani parliamentarians that the FTA will further promote trade and bilateral relations and help Pakistan in resolving its economic crisis. They said US wants to build a long-term partnership and a relationship of trust with Pakistan and would extend full help and cooperation in strengthening the democratic institutions. The US Congressional delegation, headed by David Price, Chairman of the

House Democracy Partnership Commission, included."

News Story: "PM Welcomes U.S. Initiative On Afghanistan" "The News" (11/14)

"Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has welcomed the U.S. initiative of taking Pakistan into confidence and seeking its input in its ongoing review of Afghan policy and conveyed Islamabad's concerns on crossing over of Afghan Taliban into Pakistan's territory. The Prime Minister said this in a meeting with U.S. National Security Advisor James Jones who called on him here at the Prime Minister House on Friday. The U.S. official also held meetings with President Asif Ali Zardari, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani and Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi during which matters relating to mutual interest came under discussion."

News Story: "U.S. Condemns Terrorist Attacks in Bannu and Peshawar" "Express" (11/14)

"The United States condemned the terrorist attacks today in Bannu and Peshawar that killed and injured many innocent Pakistanis."

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: 26 more militants killed in Swat - "The News" (11/16)

"Twelve more militants were killed in clashes with security forces in Karakar and Shamozaai Gharai while 14 bodies were found dumped in Charbagh's Gulibagh area in the Swat Valley on Sunday. It was the second consecutive day that clashes between security forces and militants were reported from the restive valley."

News Story: Hillary Says Uprooting Al Qaeda Main Objective - "Dawn" (11/16)

"US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said on Sunday the United States had made it clear to Pakistan that its main objective in the region was to uproot Al Qaeda. The statement, given in a television interview, comes a day after Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani urged the United States to take Pakistan into confidence before making any decision on its Afghan policy"

Editorial Note: "Secret Operation In Quetta And American Interests," an editorial note in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (11/16)

"According to a wire service report, an important national security organization has conducted four secret operations to get clue of the Taliban presence in Quetta. American CIA's technical assistance was also sought for the activity. No evidence of Taliban presence in Quetta was found. According to the press report, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and General James Jones have been conveyed the operation's results and they are satisfied that the Taliban Shoora does not exist in Quetta.... Now that American claims of the Taliban Shoora existence in Quetta have been rebutted, what is the need for conducting and expanding operation against our own citizens?"

News Story: U.S. shifted TTP leaders to Afghanistan: Beg - "The News" (11/16)

"General (retd) Mirza Aslam Beg has alleged that the US has shifted Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) chief Hakimullah Mehsud and the other Taliban leadership to Afghanistan."

News Story: Top Taliban Commander Held In Punjab - "The News" (11/16)

"Intelligence agencies have captured a top leader of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) from a major city of the Punjab after trailing him for a week. The leader who can only be identified by his initials N.A.Z owing to sensitive ongoing interrogations is said to rank amongst the top leaders of the category -3 classifications done by the law enforcing agencies. Category-1 includes Osama Bin Laden, Mulla Omar and Aymen al-Zawahiri. Category-2 includes Hakeemullah Mehsud, Maulvi Fazlullah etc, while Category-3 top leaders comprise the cadre that is directly

responsible for specific territories, which in this terrorist leader's case was the entire Punjab and the federal capital. He was described by an investigating official as an "information treasure trove".

News Story: TTP Member Admits Killing Polish Engineer - "Daily Times" (11/16)

"A Taliban, considered a close aide of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Darra Adam Khel commander Tariq, on Sunday confessed to killing a Polish engineer earlier in the year, a private TV channel reported."

News Story: Peshawar Suicide Attack Death Toll Rises To 15- "Daily Times" (11/16)

"The death toll from a suicide car bombing at a police checkpoint in Peshawar rose to 15 on Sunday, police and administrative officials said. The bomber detonated his cache of explosives on Saturday as police tried to stop and search his vehicle at a checkpoint in the city."

News Story: Raiwind Gathering Slams Taliban - "Dawn" (11/16)

"Inayatullah Khan sits on a dusty rug and prepares to pray at the country's one of biggest religious gatherings of 400,000 people, cursing the Taliban for their 'unholy crusade' against humanity. Khan travelled all the way from South Waziristan to take part in the four-day event in Raiwind. They call those who refuse to follow their brand of Islam infidels, not knowing they are inviting the wrath of Allah the almighty by killing Muslims, which I call an unholy crusade," he said. Khan invited the Taliban "to join us in spreading Islam's eternal message of love, affection and peace". The Thursday-Sunday gathering in Raiwind is being held under tight security due to a campaign of attacks that have swept the country killing more than 2,500 people in two years."

Editorial: "Bomb Blasts: Broad-Based Consultation, Parliament's Meeting Need Of The Hour" an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir.

300,000) (11/16)

"The deadly terrorist attacks in Peshawar and other cities of the NWFP are the upshots of the ongoing military offensive in Waziristan and other tribal areas. The failure of the U.S and the NATO forces in defeating Taliban and, hence, the possible withdrawal of the foreign troops from Afghanistan will also create troubles for Pakistan. It necessitates the need for our government to formulate a national strategy to cope with any situation in future after taking all political and religious parties as well as the military leadership on board."

News Story: One-Third Of CIA Budget Goes To ISI- "Daily Times" (11/16)

"The CIA has funnelled hundreds of millions of dollars to the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) since the 9/11 attacks, accounting for as much as one-third of the foreign spy agency's annual budget - reported an American newspaper, citing current and former US officials. The Los Angeles Times quoted officials as saying that the ISI had also 'collected tens of millions of dollars through a classified CIA program that pays for the capture or killing of wanted militants, a clandestine counterpart to the rewards publicly offered by the State Department'."

Opinion: "Terrorism and Muslims," an op-ed by Dr Syed Mansoor Hussain in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (11/16)

"Islamic terrorism is a maliciously motivated misnomer used by those opposed to Islam for religious or political reasons. But the fact that many Muslims do have a tendency to think of the Muslims as a unified 'Ummah' that crosses cultural and national boundaries has helped to solidify this idea of an international Muslim terrorist conglomerate. . . Whether we like it or not, just as the Muslims in Pakistan are responsible for creating the suicide bombers blowing things up these days, we the American Muslims are also equally responsible for creating the likes of Major Nidal Malik Hasan."

Editorial: Knots And Tangles, " an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (11/16)

"With President Obama almost a year into his presidency there is no foreign policy issue that demands his attention like that presented by Pakistan and Afghanistan, both separately and in the uncomfortable Af-Pak conflation. The much discussed question of whether to increase US troop levels in Afghanistan is ongoing but cannot be deferred much longer. . . The Obama presidency would not wish either of these grim scenarios to become reality, hence American interest in all our doings, but it is a conditional interest and the key to understanding it lies in Obama's own words... 'that we have an effective partnership with Pakistan that is working to achieve our goals in the entire region and that we're not working at cross purposes...' Note the words 'our goals' - and then spend a few minutes wondering how many of America's goals might be ours too."

Opinion: "The War In Afghanistan," an op-ed by Javed Hussain in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (11/16)

". . . An offensive strategy would need far more troops. The Americans went to Afghanistan to fight a war. They should plan to win it - unless they want to be known as a superpower defeated twice by guerillas. Blaming Pakistan and prodding it to 'do more' would not win the war for them."

Opinion: "The Afghan Cauldron," an op-ed by Talat Masood in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (11/16)

"President Obama during his election campaign and even before that had maintained that Iraq was a wrong war and Afghanistan the right one. Now he seems to be having second thoughts. There are two views in Washington with several variables in terms of troop strengths and strategy. Vice President Joseph Biden, President Obama's chief of staff Rahm Emmanuel and the US ambassador in Afghanistan are opposed to increased troop levels and resources as Afghanistan is considered a black hole. They would like the US to engage in counter-terrorism and do a phased withdrawal. Gen McChrystal, the operational US

commander in Afghanistan, in his strategy review recommends an increase in the strength of the international force, development of Afghan security forces rapidly and maximum priority to governance. Gen McChrystal has recommended induction of at least 40,000 additional troops. Admiral Mullen and Gen Petraeus endorse Gen McChrystal assessment. Irrespective of whichever strategy is adopted its success will largely depend on the Afghan government's ability in providing good governance, something that has been grossly missing in the past."

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: 'Blackwater Operatives' Night Curfew - "The Nation" (11/16)

"Presence of suspicious foreigners (possibly operatives of Blackwater) in G-6/3, one of the posh sectors of federal capital, has rung alarm bell among the peaceful locals, The Nation has learnt on Sunday. . . According to frightened residents of the locality, there has been observed fair amount of activities after 11 pm till dawn. Due to their presence, the locals, most of them government officials, fear for their lives and feel completely insecure keeping in view the Backwater's role in Iraq."

News Story: U.S. Bent Upon Destroying Pakistan - "The Nation" (11/16)

"Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Secretary General Liaquat Baloch has said that America was undermining the roots of Pakistan through political, strategic and economic intervention, and its presence in Afghanistan would cause devastation for this region. While addressing a press conference at the residence of Punjab Naib Ameer and ex-MNA Mian Aslam, he blamed America for promoting extremism among the people in a bid to destabilize the entire region in general and Pakistan and Afghanistan in particular."

Editorial: "Taliban's Impact On Polio Drive an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (11/16)

"The NWFP Health Department has expressed concern over the rising number of polio cases in the province and FATA . . . All these areas are former strongholds of the Taliban and the target of Mullah Fazlullah's illegal, ill-informed and effectively destructive radio broadcasts. The WHO acting chief in NWFP has reported that a few years ago, Swat and Bajaur were polio-free. It is heartening to note that the polio vaccine refusal ratio in the province has dropped to 0.6 percent this year as against 2006 when 70 percent of the province's population refused to take the vaccine. . . Now that the anticipated, though still unfortunate outcome of that ignorant campaign is damaging our children, it is time that the public be informed about the details of the long-term damage that the Taliban mindset brought to this country, Unfortunately, such damage is not restricted to polio but damaged us in diverse fields such as economics, education, culture, and above all, the political prospects of this country."

Opinion: "Cooperating In Water," an op-ed by Michael Kugelman in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (11/16)

". . . To be sure, a series of Pakistani-American exchanges about water will not magically replenish reservoirs or rivers. Plus, visa delays and security problems could undermine efforts to bring people together. Still, such cooperative projects serve a valuable purpose. They focus attention on an urgent issue that affects millions in both countries, in a way that places Pakistanis and Americans on an equal footing, and in an environment free of uncomfortable talk about Conditionalities and deliverables. In other words, they make Pakistan-US relations a bit less transactional and a little more equitable. And that's an outcome \$125m or \$1.5bn cannot easily buy. (All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson